TAYLOR SWIFT AND HER $40 MILLION LEGS

THE SINGER ACTUALLY GOT HER APPENDAGES PRICED. PAGE 17

metro

PHILADELPHIA No. 1 FREE DAILY IN THE US

Tuesday, March 10, 2015 www.metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

Dangerous grade. Amtrak's The Carolinian went off the tracks in Halifax, North Carolina, when a tractor-trailer carrying a prefabricated house got stuck on a street-level crossing. More than 60 passengers were injured. PAGE 02

DERAILED

Emergency officials respond to a train that derailed Monday in North Carolina. / ABC 11 WTVD

Watch out! What to know about Apple Watch

PAGE 07

Get to know 'Marigold Hotel' star Tina Desai

PAGE 18

Eagles very active in free agency frenzy

PAGES 25, 26, 28

Penn

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Philly-bound train derailed at crossing

Street-level. The Carolinian was on its routine daily trip when it struck a tractor trailer stuck on a grade crossing.

Another street-level train crossing — and another frightening train accident.

Except this time no one died.

The engine of a New York City-bound Amtrak train toppled over, derailing two passenger cars in Halifax, North Carolina, Monday after slamming into a tractor-trailer that several witnesses say appeared to have gotten stuck on the tracks of a grade crossing.

"Oh, my God! Oh, my God!" a woman who caught the moment of impact is heard screaming from her car in a video posted on Twitter and YouTube.

More than 60 passengers were hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries, officials with the North Carolina Department of Transportation said.

There were 200 people on board the train — The Carolinian — which runs daily and was to make stops in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, Delaware, Trenton, and New York's Penn Station.

"There was a massive jerk and we were kind of thrown forward a little bit, and the train came to a sudden stop," Charlotte Story, a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who was in the seventh car, told local CBS affiliate WRAL.

A passenger making the 10-hour trip north to New York City, 21-year-old Patrick Narmi, said the conductor slammed on the brakes moment before the accident and he watched out the window what happened next.

"A few seconds later, I heard the impact. … The train ran right through it," he told the Raleigh News & Observer. Narmi flew from his seat and landed headfirst into the seat in front of him, before falling to the floor.

Story also said that the breaking was sudden: "I couldn't tell you if it was trying to slow down or not. … It came completely out of the blue."

Things could have been far worse, as recent history has shown.

Just last month, north of New York City, an MTA Metro-North train packed with evening rush-hour commuters trying to get home slammed into an SUV on the tracks of a grade crossing in the Westchester hamlet of Valhalla.

The electrified third rail pierced the first car, killing six people, including five men and the woman driving the SUV.

Regulators and rail advocates have, for years, called for better safety at grade crossings, where the only thing between cars and a barreling train is a stick wood crossing gate.

After the Metro-North tragedy, Sens. Charles Schumer of New York and Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, called for increased funding to upgrade safety at accident-prone crossings. In 2013 alone, 200 people died at similar crossings.

"It is critical that the federal government do more to make engineering upgrades at accident-prone crossings, boost public awareness of the dangers at such crossings, and improve reporting of dangerous problems at crossings," Schumer said.

Their Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Act of 2015 would boost funding for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), states and municipalities to make engineering and safety upgrades, like installing new lights and signals.

The FRA said Monday it will probe the Amtrak collision and the National Transportation Safety Board said it was monitoring developments. Amtrak officials plan their own investigation.

The train hit the midsection of the tractor trailer, which one local Halifax woman said was going back and forth trying to maneuver a turn from U.S. Route 301 onto a more narrow two-lane road.

JOHN A. OSWALD
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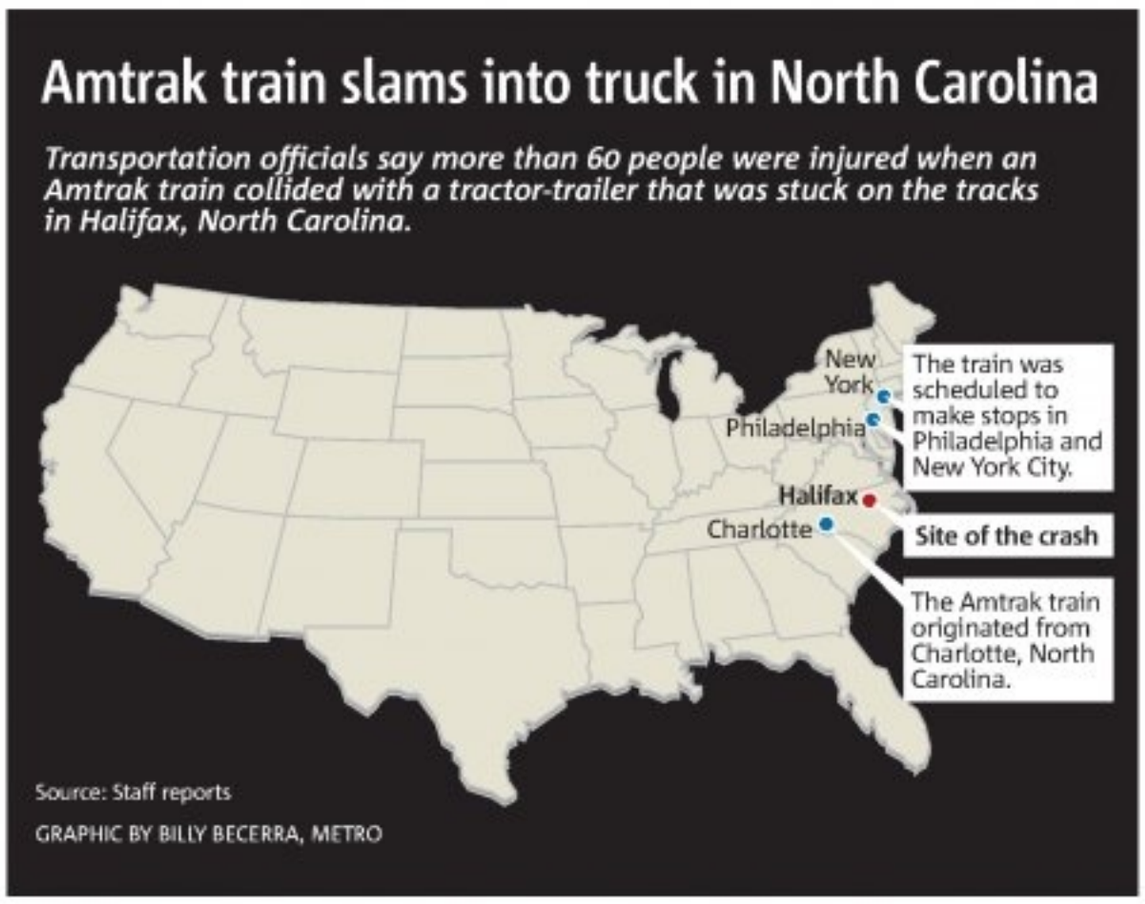

Amtrak train slams into truck in North Carolina
Transportation officials say more than 60 people were injured when an Amtrak train collided with a tractor-trailer that was stuck on the tracks in Halifax, North Carolina.
New York
Philadelphia
Halifax
Charlotte
The train was scheduled to make stops in Philadelphia and New York City.
Site of the crash
The Amtrak train originated from Charlotte, North Carolina.
Source: Staff reports
GRAPHIC BY BILLY BECERRA, METRO

Quoted

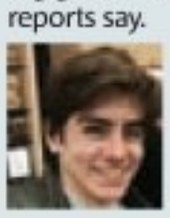
"I couldn't tell you if it was trying to slow down or not. It came completely out of the blue." Charlotte Story

Delaware County

Shipley boy shot self: Authorities

Cayman Naib, 13, the missing Shipley School student found dead in a creek on Sunday five days after he went missing, died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head, authorities said.

Naib left his Newtown Square home on Wednesday evening, the same night a heavy snowstorm blanketed the area with 10 inches, after receiving information about a failing grade from the school, reports say.



The Delaware County Medical Examiner completed its autopsy and released the cause of death Monday.

Naib's body was found in Darby Creek a few hundred yard away from his home on his family's property. SAM NEWHOUSE

Schools. Green drops suit over demotion from role as SRC chair

School Reform Commissioner Bill Green won't challenge Gov. Tom Wolf's decision to remove him as chairman.

"This is not a time for distractions," Green said in a statement. "I believe I am correct on the merits, but I will not risk compromising support for the District by pursuing a court action at the same time as the plan's rollout."

Wolf demoted Green, who was chairman of the SRC, and replaced him with Marjorie Neff, a former principal of the Julia R. Masterman School.

Wolf's action was largely seen as a response to the SRC's approval of five new charter schools, which many observers contended the district could not afford. Neff was the only commissioner to vote against all 39 charter schools. DAN KELLEY

Bill Green / FILE PHOTO

1 NEWS

Top 3

The best of Metro.us

1 'Suge Knight hit and run video leaks'

2 'Marijuana: The side effect you need to know'

3 'Madonna dubs Kanye West "the black Madonna," because obviously'

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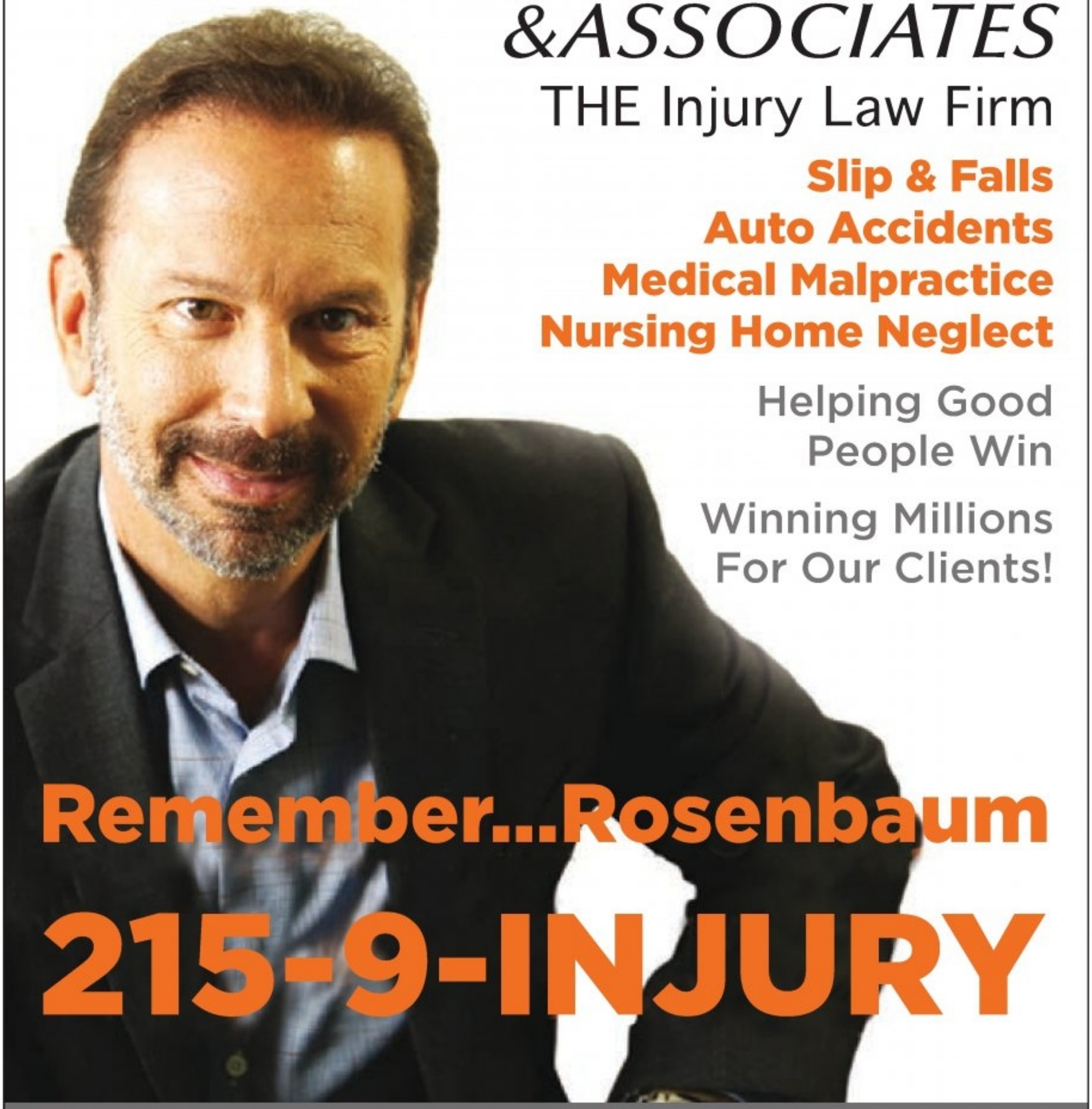

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Guilty. Black Madam faulted in death of 20-year-old Briton

Padge Victoria Windslowe, better known as the "Black Madam," was found guilty Monday of 3rd-degree homicide in the death of a 20-year-old British woman who died in 2011 after receiving illicit cosmetic surgery in a hotel room.

Windslowe, 43, described herself as a "fairy godmom" to women seeking inexpensive cosmetic surgery that took the form of silicone injections to the breasts and buttocks during a so-called "pumping party." She claimed she only wanted to help women, saying she used the same industrial-grade silicone she injected into women on herself.

"She did it for the money, pure and simple," said Assistant District Attorney Bridget Kirn.

Attorney David Rudenstein says Windslowe has expressed remorse for the death of British dancer Claudia Aderotimi.

Because coroners found it difficult to rule that the silicone injections killed Aderotimi, Windslowe remained free — and working — for more than a year. But when a 23-year-old woman turned up in an area hospital after another pumping party in 2012, investigators tracked Windslowe down in Germantown, where she was going to yet another pumping party.

DAN KELLEY

Quoted

"She's always expressed remorse. She's always felt very bad." Rudenstein

Spring has sprung, get lunch outside

Days after the heaviest snowfall of the year, it appears that spring has finally sprung. Students flocked to Rittenhouse Square during lunchtime as temperatures rose to over 50 degrees for the first time in weeks on Monday. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

Northeast Philly

Mom pleads to attempted trafficking of daughter

A Philadelphia mom on Monday admitted in federal court to sending a sexually explicit photograph of her 6-year-old daughter to an undercover FBI agent she met on the Internet.

Christine Yoder, 32, also agreed to fly her daughter to Detroit for sexual activity.

Using the instant messaging app Kik in May 2014 she told the agent, "I don't want anything to do with her after you take her," according to court documents.

Using usernames like "freakygirl82" and "sexygirl32" on Kik, she sent the messages and told the FBI agent she wanted him to impregnate the 6-year-old, court records say.

METRO

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USED CARS $ as low as 999

FRED BEANS REPEATS HISTORIC USED CAR SALE

Doylestown, PA – Fred Beans, CEO and founder of the Fred Beans Automotive Group located in Doylestown, PA, has announced a **ONE DAY SALE** on Saturday, March 14th at 9:00AM, where pre-owned vehicles will be sold for as low as **$999**. This sale is being held due to overwhelming public demand.

Cars will be clearly marked, so come early for the best selection. This is a **ONE DAY ONLY** sale designed to get the local community driving again.

Fred Beans' pre-owned inventory levels need to be reduced to make room for shipments of new models arriving daily. As a result, **all 8 Fred Beans Doylestown locations are selling these overstocked pre-owned vehicles to the public at drastic discounts in an attempt to clear excess inventory**.

In addition to this huge variety of pre-owned vehicles, the Fred Beans Family of Dealerships in Doylestown features new Ford, Lincoln, Mitsubishi, Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep, Hyundai, Nissan, Subaru, Chevrolet, Cadillac, Buick, and GMC vehicles.

Fred Beans believes reviving the economy starts at home, and changing things locally will lead to changing things nationally.

In addition to the Fred Beans Family of Dealerships' extra inventory, additional vehicles have been acquired for this sale at incredible prices from various banks, repossession companies, auto auctions, credit unions, lease companies, and rental companies.

The sale will make pre-owned vehicles available for as low as **$999**, prices not normally offered to the general public. According to Fred Beans, ***"We want to give our customers a reason to believe in the local economy again. Someone has to look out for their best interest."***

Customers are encouraged to arrive and register by 8:15AM to inspect the entire inventory and find the car that's right for them. Every vehicle will be cleaned, detailed, and fully prepared for instant delivery. On the evening of March 14th, after the close of business, Mr. Beans and his team will mark the special sale price on each and every vehicle.

Because Fred Beans' customers are feeling the credit crunch right now, the Fred Beans Automotive Group has given the dealerships' financing managers the resources necessary to get most customers' credit approved on the spot.

The Fred Beans Family of Dealerships has $10 million in lending power, the result of over 50 years of strong relationships with the area's leading lenders. This means that customers with "less-than-perfect" credit history can have their credit approved and drive home a quality pre-owned car, truck, or SUV by lunchtime on Saturday.

Even if a customer's credit report shows a bankruptcy, divorce, tax lien, slow payment history, missed payment, or repossession, or if a customer is a first-time buyer, Fred Beans may get them approved.

This special **ONE DAY ONLY** sale will be held at all 8 Fred Beans Doylestown locations this Saturday, March 14th, at 9:00AM.

Pre-owned vehicles will be sold for as low as $999. Customers are encouraged to arrive and register by 8:15AM for the start of inspection. Incredible sale prices, starting as low as **$999**, will be posted no later than 8:00AM. All vehicles will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis. The Fred Beans Family of Dealerships is expecting a high volume of customers for this sale, so be sure to reserve your spot early.

Customers wishing to trade in a vehicle are asked to bring their title or payment book for immediate delivery. Fred Beans will even pay off your trade-in in full, no matter how much you still owe on it.*

Most of these surplus pre-owned vehicles will get sent directly to auto auctions for liquidation. So if anyone has been thinking about purchasing a good, clean, dependable pre-owned car, truck, van, or sport utility vehicle, don't miss this special **ONE DAY ONLY** sale.

Courtesy transportation is available from all local airports, train stations and bus depots.

For more information about this sale and directions to our locations, please visit us online at **www.999sale.com or call 855-656-0699**

*At least four vehicles on Fred Beans' lots will be sold for as low as $999 on March 14th, 2015. All offers to qualified buyers. Cannot be combined with other offers.

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Ask SEPTA

JOE CASEY

SEPTA GENERAL MANAGER

Send your questions about SEPTA services and other issues about the transit agency to christina.paciolla@metro.us. They will be forwarded to Joe Casey who will answer them in a special monthly column here.

SEPTA MOVING FORWARD WITH WAWA EXTENSION

I've been waiting for years to hear news regarding the extension of the Media/Elwyn line to Wawa. With the passage of the state transportation bill, when is a realistic time this could be done? Will there be notice when this question is answered, or when the column regularly is printed to keep an eye for an answer?

With the passage of Act 89 and State Transportation funding, SEPTA is now able to move forward with the Wawa Service Restoration Project. SEPTA has recently completed acquisition of needed property at the proposed Wawa station. Design and permitting for the project is being finalized with construction to start in 2017. The Project is currently scheduled to be completed in late 2020.

Why are there so very few seats for seniors and handicapped on the Paoli/Thorndale trains? Many times I have to stand because there are no seats. I have no problem on city buses or the Market Frankford El, because seats are marked. Can you rectify this problem?

Federal regulations require that at least one car per train be ADA accessible. However, all of SEPTA's Regional Rail SilverLiner cars and Push/Pull cab cars have Priority Seating. The accessible seats — designated by Priority Seating decals — are located directly inside the doors. The two sets of benches near the center of the newer SilverLiner V cars can be flipped up to accommodate a wheelchair.

A SEPTA regional rail train pulls into the Crum Lynne station.
CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

The older Silverliner IV and Push/Pull cab cars feature a two person bench seat and space for a wheelchair. If the Priority Seating area is occupied with passengers, let the conductor know that you need a seat in this area. Please be aware that the conductor must ask, but cannot require, that someone move to another seat. If the conductor is unable to secure a seat for you in the car, he or she may seek Priority Seating in another car for you.

Who thought it would be a good idea to move the original bus stop on the corners to deeper into the next block? This means the driver has to almost take you to the next stop, and riders have to walk back ... The stops are usually in front of a residence.

As a result of a collaborative effort between the City of Philadelphia and SEPTA to provide the best overall service to riders, a number of transit stops along the Route 52 have been relocated. Transit stops are strategically placed based on customer accessibility and operational concerns.

Bus stops may end up being placed in front of a private residence or a commercial business. We appreciate all feedback and will continue to review and monitor the overall placement of our transit stop locations.

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Apple Watch. Five things to know

APPLE WATCH / GETTY IMAGES

Apple's event on Monday, cleverly named "Spring Forward," featured the Apple Watch. If you weren't able to tune in to the event, here are the five things you need to know:

1. The cost
The Apple watch will be available in three distinct families divided primarily by the material from which they are made. All will come in two screen sizes: 38 mm and 44 mm. The lowest-priced Apple Watch will cost $349 for the 38mm version and $399 for the 44mm version. The most expensive Apple Watch will be made of 18 carat gold. Prices for that timepiece will start at $10,000 and it will be available at select stores.

Question

5. When can I get one?

Apple announced that the Apple Watch will be available for pre-orders on April 10th and also available to try in stores on the same day.

2. The battery
A major concern about the Apple Watch has been how long the device's battery would last. Apple CEO Tim Cook boasted that an average day's use will result in the battery lasting 18 hours. One energy saving feature - the glance - permits the watch's screen to light up only when looked at.

3. The Apps
A host of apps were announced and presented to the event's audience. With the Apple Watch users can make phone calls, send texts, read and send emails, unlock doors and open garages remotely. Apple Pay will be coming to watch as well.

4. Options, options, options
One of the aspects of the Apple Watch that the company was most emphatic about was the menu of options available for users in regards to the look and function of the watch. Apple Watch customers will have a variety of wrist bands and watch faces literally at your fingertips.

MATT LEE, METRO

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'Simpsons' co-creator Sam Simon succumbs to colon cancer at 59

Long battle. Simon left the popular show in 1993.

Sam Simon, co-creator of "The Simpsons," died on Monday after a battle with colon cancer.

Simon, 59, was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2013.

The Sam Simon Foundation announced his death on Facebook, saying, "It is with much sadness that we must let you know that Sam Simon has passed over. We all miss him, and in his honor, we will continue bringing his vision to light through our work at The Sam Simon Foundation. We take comfort in knowing how many greetings he is receiving across that Rainbow Bridge. We love you Sam!"

Simon's most successful endeavor was co-creating "The Simpsons" with Matt Groening and James L. Brooks.

The three showrunners worked together on "The Tracey Ullman Show" and created shorts featuring the Simpsons' family that aired on "The Tracey Ullman Show." "The Simpsons" debuted as a primetime TV show in 1989.

Sam Simon / GETTY IMAGES

Simon left the show in 1993 but with a deal to receive royalties and credits. He retired in his mid-30s, reports the Hollywood Reporter.

Simon was a known animal lover, and the Sam Simon Foundation is dedicated to rescuing stray dogs.

He has given millions of dollars to various animal welfare charities.

ANDREA PARK, METRO

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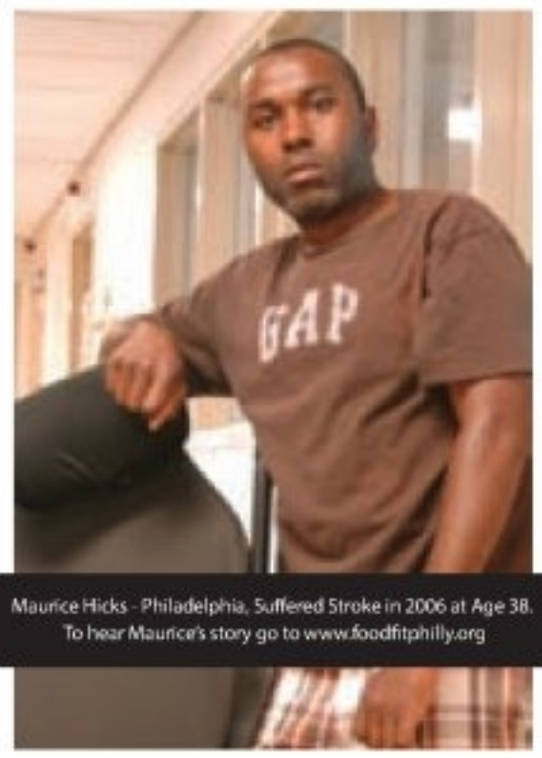
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Republicans warn Obama's nuclear deal with Iran may not last

Oppose deal.
White House said the letter was a partisan effort to undermine Obama's foreign policy.

President Barack Obama / GETTY IMAGES

Forty-seven Republican senators warned Iran's leaders on Monday that any nuclear deal with President Barack Obama could last only as long as he remains in office, an unusual partisan intervention in foreign policy that could undermine delicate international talks with Tehran.

The open letter was signed by all but seven of the Republicans in the Senate and none of Obama's fellow Democrats, who called it a "stunt." Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif dismissed it as a "propaganda ploy" from pressure groups he called afraid of diplomatic agreement.

In the letter, the senators said Congress plays a role in ratifying international agreements. Noting Obama will leave office in January 2017, they said any deal not approved by Congress would be merely "an executive agreement" that could be revoked by Congress. REUTERS

Quoted

"I think it's somewhat ironic to see some members of Congress wanting to make common cause with the hardliners in Iran. It's an unusual coalition."
Obama

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Jefferson
HEALTH IS ALL WE DO

Five things you need to know

1 US offers $5M for missing American, appeals to Iran

The United States offered $5 million on Monday for help in finding an American who disappeared in Iran eight years ago and appealed to Tehran to cooperate in the search for the former FBI agent, Robert Levinson.

"We ask the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to work cooperatively with us on the investigation into Robert Levinson's disappearance so we can ensure his safe return," Secretary of State John Kerry said in a statement.

The White House National Security Council said it was "committed to the safe return of Bob Levinson to his family."

Levinson disappeared from Kish Island, an Iranian resort in the Gulf, on March 9, 2007, while on a business trip as a private investigator. His friends said he had been investigating illicit trafficking in cigarettes, mainly in Latin America.

Levinson traveled to Kish to meet Daoud Salahuddin, an American wanted in the murder of an Iranian diplomat in a Washington suburb in 1980. Levinson's friends have said he believed Salahuddin had information on corruption in Iran. Salahuddin has denied knowing what happened to Levinson. **REUTERS**

Daniel Levinson shows photo of his father. / GETTY IMAGES

2 Republicans warn Iran nuclear deal with Obama may not last

Republican U.S. senators warned Iran's leaders on Monday that any nuclear deal with President Barack Obama could last only as long as he remains in office, an unusual partisan intervention into foreign policy that could undermine delicate international talks with Tehran.

The open letter was signed by 47 senators, all but seven of the Republicans in the Senate, and none of Obama's fellow Democrats, who called it a "stunt." It says Congress plays a role in ratifying international agreements and points out that Obama will leave office in January 2017. **REUTERS**

3 U of Oklahoma closes frat linked to racist video

The University of Oklahoma closed a fraternity linked to a video of students singing racial epithets, ordered its members to move out of the house and labeled the actions of those involved "disgraceful."

"Effective immediately, all ties and affiliations between the university and the local SAE chapter are hereby severed," University President David Boren said.

Members have until midnight on Tuesday to vacate the premises. **REUTERS**

4 Obama emailed Clinton on her private address: White House

President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton exchanged emails during her time as secretary of state, the White House said on Monday, confirming the president was aware that his potential successor used a private email address for government work.

Obama said in an interview with CBS on Saturday that he found out about Clinton's use of a personal email account through recent news reports, but White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Obama was aware of her address earlier. **REUTERS**

5 Standalone service for HBO coming to Apple devices

HBO's standalone streaming service will launch on Apple Inc devices next month in time for the season premiere of hit series "Game of Thrones," the network said on Monday, a move to reach millions of viewers who do not subscribe to pay television packages.

The new HBO Now service will cost $14.99 a month. It will include all of the network's past, present and future series plus its lineup of Hollywood movies. **REUTERS**

LENA DUNHAM FROM THE HBO HIT SHOW 'GIRLS.' GETTY IMAGES

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Cuba + United States = <3 ?

Politics. Metro examines the historic move in thawing relations and touches upon its consequences.

A new course in U.S. relations with Cuba to "further engage and empower the Cuban people" was recently announced by President Barack Obama. On Jan. 15 officials began in Havana to discuss lifting the commercial, economic, and financial embargo imposed on Cuba since 1962.

Latin American leaders were astonished and excited by the historic resumption of diplomatic relations between these two countries.

"It is not surprising that the U.S. is finally moving to normalize relations with Cuba," Wayne S. Smith, senior fellow of the Cuba Project at Washington D.C. think tank Center for International Policy, told Metro. "Polls indicated the majority of Americans disapproved the long-standing hardline policy of embargo and refusal to dialogue. In fact, the U.S. had been in secret negotiations with Cuba for many months to open diplomatic relations."

The two nations have already exchanged captured spies and eased travel conditions. Havana also agreed to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross and United Nations human rights officials back on the island.

"Changes in the lives of the Cuban people will depend on how much their government would be ready to allow: the internet, empowering civil society, training for entrepreneurs, remittances, and imports," Eugenio Yáñez, editor of the Cuban think tank Cubanálisis, told Metro.

Cuba appears to be ready to ameliorate the average citizen's life by promising to permit online access for citizens. Internet movie and TV streaming service Netflix became one of the first companies to enter Cuba's digital entertainment industry.

But will people be able to pay for the $7.99 service? To that end, friends and family in the United States will be able to send $2,000 to Cubans per quarter, an increase from $500.

"The average good professional in Cuba: a doctor, an engineer, a teacher, makes $30 a month, at most," Cuba-born professor of sociology at University of Michigan Silvia Pedraza explained. "So, they are usually "asphyxiated", as they call it, thinking about how to put decent food on the table and cloth their families. For this, they rely a lot on their families overseas, which they call "La Fe" (faith). But I do not anticipate major changes in terms of lifestyle. Cubans are not great consumers."

Multinational financial services corporations such as MasterCard and American Express will allow their cards to be used in Cuba from March 1. And that will be a green light for many American tourists to visit the island.

"For Puerto Rico, for example, it will mean a loss for their tourism," Pedraza added. "Cuba has a vibrant culture, together with the exotic appeal that a socialist revolution gives. Now resorts will have to compete for tourists again, and I believe Cuba will do rather well there."

Aside from the non-touristic sphere, relations with Cuba's historic allies will also be affected. Experts expect Cuban partners to be overshadowed for some time.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Quoted

"Openings by President Obama may offer relief to Cubans' conditions only if the government allows citizens to enjoy the new realities."

Eugenio Yáñez, editor of the Cuban think tank Cubanálisis

By the numbers

27.4

27.4 percent of the Cuban population has access to the internet now, according to Internet Live Stats. But it includes people that can only enter state-approved websites. Only 5% of Cubans have access to the open internet, according to Freedom House research institute.

Financial

US credit cards

Multinational financial services corporations such as MasterCard and American Express will allow their cards to be used in Cuba from March 1st. And that will be a green light for many American tourists to visit the island.

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In brief

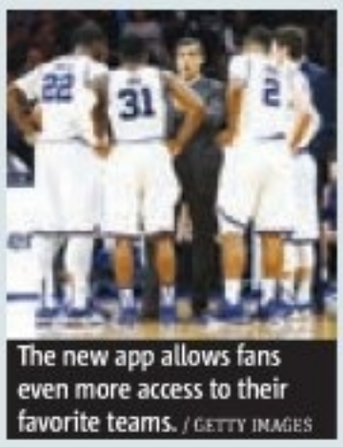
New app focuses on Villanova sports

Villanova University has teamed up with OneUp Sports to create the first collegiate stand-alone mobile app.

The new app (which is available for free on iTunes) is meant to engage students, fans, and alums with the university's athletic department.

"The Villanova faithful are a passionate group who will now have the opportunity to utilize this mobile platform to interact socially and engage in Wildcats Athletics, 24/7," says Daren Trousdell, the CEO of OneUp Sports, tells The Sporting News.

The company has also worked with the NFL, NBA, MLB, NASCAR, and PGA Tour.



The new app allows fans even more access to their favorite teams. / GETTY IMAGES

Helping ex-offenders start businesses

A new partnership between the Rescue Mission of Trenton and the University of Pennsylvania hopes to help former convicts create their own businesses.

The program will last 10 weeks and has enrolled nine clients from the Rescue Mission's drug and alcohol program. Charlotte Ren, a professor from University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice, is adapting the program from one of her entrepreneurship classes.

Each of the clients from the Rescue Mission will be paired with a mentor student from UPenn.

Taking notes by hand makes a difference

In class. A professor examines the benefits of writing things down.

Students who take notes by hand get better grades. / ISTOCK

Need another reason to leave the laptop in your dorm room before heading to class? Studies show that students retain more information when they take notes the old-fashioned way, with pen and paper, rather than using a laptop or app.

Writing in the Chronicle of Higher Education last week, professor Carol E. Holstead said that she finally banned laptops and other electronic devices from her classroom after realizing that her students were getting too distracted by Facebook and YouTube.

Wondering if her students really would learn better in a laptop-free environment, Holstead decided to ban computers from her University of Kansas classroom in 2013. The results surprised even her.

The results

After her first laptop-free semester, Holstead surveyed her class to see if the ban worked.

"I was heartened by the results," she writes. "Roughly 86 percent of the 95 students who responded said they felt they paid the same or better attention in the class without a laptop in front of them. About 52 percent said they paid more attention."

The students' newly focused attention was also reflected in their grades. Holstead noted that test scores have also gone up.

LAKSHMI GANDHI
@LakshmiGandhi
lakshmi.gandhi@metro.us

Efficiency

Take better notes

Holstead and other researchers say the key to taking good notes is being selective about what you write down. Learning how to pick and choose what to take note of, and then writing it in your own words, is much more useful than trying to transcribe a lecture word-for-word.

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Besides an increase in hiring, average hourly rates rose by three cents last month. / GETTY IMAGES

Hiring rates soar after a six-year low

Employment. The U.S. labor market flexes its muscles as payroll numbers reach new heights.

U.S. employers stepped up hiring in February and the jobless rate fell to a more than 6½-year low of 5.5 percent, which could put pressure on the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates in June. Nonfarm payrolls increased 295,000 last month after rising 239,000 in January, the Labor Department reports. The broad job gains came despite disruptive weather conditions that took hold across large parts of the country in mid-February.

The decline in the unemployment rate from 5.7 percent in January took it to its lowest level since May 2008 and into territory that some Fed officials consider consistent with full employment.

"The labor market is on a roll. This should ease fears at the Fed that the global downturn and sharp drop in oil prices are materially disrupting the U.S. economic outlook, and keep the Fed firmly on course for a June lift-off," says Scott Anderson, chief economist at Bank of the West in San Francisco.

The decline in the unemployment rate, however, largely reflected people dropping out of the labor force. But economists, who had expected payrolls to rise only 240,000 and the unemployment rate to fall to 5.6 percent, notes that other indicators monitored by the U.S. central bank showed a rapidly tightening labor market.

February marked the 12th straight month that employment gains have been above 200,000, the longest such run since 1994. The dollar rallied to a fresh 11½-year high against a basket of currencies as traders brought forward bets on when the Fed would raise rates. However, futures markets continued to point to a first rate hike in September.

U.S. stocks and government bond prices fell. Average hourly earnings rose by three cents last month, leaving the year-on-year gain at 2 percent. That compared to a 2.2 percent rise seen in the 12 months through January.

While economists acknowledge that persistently sluggish wage growth and very benign inflation argued against the Fed pulling the trigger in June, they say tightening conditions in the labor market could force the central bank's hand.

"Even if the Fed decides to delay the lift-off in policy, it is hard to see the downward trend in unemployment not continuing," says Jeremy Lawson, chief economist at Standard Life Investments in Edinburgh, Scotland.

"Will the Fed really want short-term interest rates to be negative when the unemployment rate falls below 5 percent late this year or early next year?" REUTERS

Quoted

"The labor market is on a roll. This should ease fears at the Fed that the global downturn and sharp drop in oil prices are materially disrupting the U.S. economic outlook." Scott Anderson, chief economist at Bank of the West

By the numbers

295K
Increase in nonfarm payrolls during the month of February, according to the Labor Department

5.5%
Decline in the jobless rate in February

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More Lindsay Lohan legal trouble

The offending Lohans. / ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

THE WORD

Ned Ehrbar takes on the world of gossip.

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There's always something to keep Lindsay Lohan's lawyers busy, and if it's not suspicious community service hours claims, it's angry ex-business partners. Fima Potik previously sued Lohan and her younger brother for $60 million for allegedly stealing an idea for a mobile app that lets users see inside celebrities' closets. He didn't get the huge payout, but he did get a restraining order against the Lohans stopping them from launching their version of the app. Now he's suing them because they have so irreparably harmed his business that he can't even afford that restraining order, according to Radar Online. Lohan's attorney calls the claims "surprising, disturbing and prejudicial."

Everything wrong with the new Bill Cosby video

ABCNEWS.COM

Showing further signs of not-terribly-great judgment, Bill Cosby released an awkward, amateur-ish video message to promote an upcoming gig. In it, the comic icon is on the phone trying to convince someone to see the show. "You know I'll be hilarious," he says in the 10-second clip. He accompanied the video with a written message: "Dear fans, I hope you enjoy my wonderful video message," he writes, before adding "Hey, Hey, Hey, I'm far from finished." Can we address how terrible a slogan "I'm far from finished" is for a man accused of more than 30 separate, horrific acts of sexual assault?

These legs are worth a bundle.

Taylor Swift's legs are worth how much?

Taylor Swift got to give one of her patented "aw shucks" looks of surprise when she looked into insuring her legs — as you do — only to learn they're worth $40 million, according to the National Enquirer. "She thought her legs were possibly worth a million. But $40 million shocked her. She's even a little embarrassed about it," a source says. "It seems like a ludicrous sum, but if something was to happen to her legs, Taylor wouldn't be able to give her signature stage performances. Her $200 million career would be in big trouble." It's with that thinking that Swift is reportedly going forward, embarrassment be damned. "She wants it all sorted out before her world tour starts in May," the source adds.

2 CULTURE

Twitter feed

Today, Bette Midler is feeling pretty popular, Olivia Wilde is deep undercover and Taylor Swift has been having some wild nights.

@BetteMidler: Archaeologists discovered two lost cities in the Nicaraguan jungles. Great, more places to go on tour! Might need a machete for this show!

@oliviawilde: Forgot my ID in our diaper bag last night and got rejected by a bouncer who said my story was exactly the type of lie a cop would tell. HA.

@taylorswift13: I woke up like thisssssss (With a cat on me)

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Tina Desai (with Dev Patel) returns in "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel." / FOX SEARCHLIGHT

The Breakthrough: Actress Tina Desai

Introductions.
Meet the young female star of "The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel."

In "The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel," Indian actress returns to her role as the flustered paramour of hotelier Dev Patel. Desai, who will soon be on the Wachowskis' Netflix show "Sense8," tells us all about herself.

Perk of fame she's most looking forward to taking advantage of: "Free makeup! I was just offered that by my makeup artist. It doesn't get better. Oh, and when you get to travel a bit more. And you get to stay at Claridge's, which I hear is such a big deal."

Biggest audition blunder: "I had just moved to Bombay from Bangalore, and we don't speak much Hindi there. I went to this audition for a TV serial, and TV serials in India can have pages and pages of dialogue. I spent about three hours trying to learn it and I was still getting the grammar wrong. They kind of looked at me arrogantly like, 'I see. You don't know your own language.' We're very blunt in India. We don't sugarcoat anything. 'You're crap. Those are rubbish shoes.'"

The last thing she Googled:
"Let me check and tell you. ... The weather in London. I wanted to know whether I would freeze or not at the premiere."

TINA DESAI / FILMMAGIC

Last book she read: "I'm still reading it. It's Elmore Leonard's 'Freaky Deaky.' It was a gift to me from Bill Nighy, actually, because I was reading some other books that he completely trashed and said, 'You will not read this!' It was a controversial writer who he felt really strongly about."

The best person to follow on Twitter or Instagram: "Ellen DeGeneres. She's really funny. I love following her. There's also Obama, because I'm interested in politics. And now there's Narendra Modi, our prime minister, who's extremely tech-savvy."

What happens after you die: "I don't know myself. There are so many people that say you go to Heaven, you go to Hell, you come back to earth reincarnated. I don't get any of them. I would prefer that you just die and that's it, nothing happens after. That makes a little bit more sense. You come here, you do your thing and that's it."

Her ideal Saturday night: "I just entered the party phase. I used to be the one who would sit at home and read a book and chat with people over the phone, but I've been given more liberty. I live with my family and I used to have a deadline of 10 p.m. but now it's 2 a.m., so it's very exciting. I actually can go out and dance. That's probably boring, that's probably what you did when you were 16, but I've only just started."

Bonus question

Her dream role

"Two things really excite me, though I have no idea how I'll do them. One is to do something completely fantasy-based, like a 'Pirates of the Caribbean' or a 'Harry Potter' or 'Lord of the Rings,' which is something that's completely based on imagination, so you can do whatever you want. I don't know how strong my imagination is, I might completely muck it up.

"The other one would be to do a biopic, and then you have no freedom. You have to completely follow that person, look like them, talk like, think like them. Those are both extremely difficult, but I think they would be fun. I really think I might muck it up like hell, but I don't know and it seems challenging."

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Gillian Flynn's book club recipe

Hosting. Here's what to serve while discussing the latest suspense novel.

A delicious look at Gillian Flynn's Beef Skillet Fiesta. / STEVE LEGATO

Even casual book club members know that half the fun of discussing the latest "it" book is eating and drinking while you do so. Now, there's a new book that will help you plan the perfect menu. Former Cosmopolitan editor-in-chief Kate White has put together "The Mystery Writers of America Cookbook" (out March 24), full of recipes from modern literary favorites such as Lee Child, Mary Higgins Clark and James Patterson. Here, we share "Gone Girl" author Gillian Flynn's recipe for Beef Skillet Fiesta.

Beef Skillet Fiesta

Recipe by: Gillian Flynn
I am no gourmet. I come from a long, proud Midwestern tradition of meals made from snack chips and canned soup. My characters tend to follow suit: They like their food simple and tasty. So here's my favorite stovetop recipe, Beef Skillet Fiesta:

Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef
- ¼ cup diced onion
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 16-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 12-ounce can corn
- 1¼ cups beef bouillon
- ½ cup thin strips of green pepper
- 1⅓ cups Minute rice

Directions:

1. Brown ground beef in a skillet and drain. Add onion and cook until tender.
2. Add salt, chili powder, pepper, tomatoes, corn, and bouillon and bring to a boil. Stir in green pepper. Bring to a boil again.
3. Stir in rice, remove from heat, and cover. Let stand for 5 minutes.
4. Fluff with a fork.
5. Serve with cottage cheese. (The cottage cheese part isn't strictly required, but highly recommended — cottage cheese makes everything better.)

Note: If you prefer regular rice to Minute rice, cook the rice separately and spoon the Skillet Fiesta over it.

— Excerpted from "The Mystery Writers of America Cookbook." Reprinted with permission from Quirk Books.

Visit **Metro.us** for three more book and food pairings.

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Singing the praises of reality TV

R&B. Jazmine Sullivan is back with a new album.

So what has Philly-born, R&B star Jazmine Sullivan been doing since she released her last album four years ago? Watching reality TV.

Actually, Sullivan, who's touring in support of her chart-topping new album "Reality TV," has a good reason why she's been out of the game, but we'll get to that later. First, why reality TV?

"The mess of it all kept my attention," says the "Bust Your Windows" singer. "It definitely influenced the album." The influence is apparent in several compelling character studies on "Reality TV," such as the body-modifying model on "Mascara."

"People are drawn to the fact that [reality TV stars] were normal people like them. When you look at stars — actors and singers — they seem to be far away," Sullivan says. "With reality shows, it gives us a way to be the same as the people we're watching. People want to feel that we're all the same."

The same, that is, if you also have your neighbor's weave in your hands after a tussle in front of the cameras.

As for "Reality TV" the album, it's full of smart, diverse grooves. Sullivan gets into car-window-smashing mode on the urgent "Dumb," which features a guest rhyme from Meek Mill. "Silver Lining" recalls the jazzy flows of Stevie Wonder's '70s jams, and "Let It Burn" has a synth-pop, early-'80s R&B vibe. The snappy "Stupid Girl" brings a retro sizzle.

As for why Sullivan left music, that's referred to on the track "Forever Don't Last," a powerhouse acoustic ballad in which she gives a wait-here-and-listen-to-this vocal performance: The 27 year old was in an abusive relationship. "You have to decide that you're the most important person ... and once you believe that," she says of moving on, "then you won't allow yourself to stay in a situation that's not healthy."

CHRIS JORDAN
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

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Jazmine Sullivan's diverse "Reality TV" runs from jazzy R&B to a powerhouse ballad. / SHANE MCCAULEY, RCA RECORDS

Art exhibit

Printmaking

'To Impress Upon'

Through March 28
Cerulean Arts
1355 Ridge Ave.
Free, 267-514-8647
www.ceruleanarts.com

This exhibit features five printmakers: Millicent Krouse, Dan Miller, Ron Rumford, Dori Specter and Michiko Yamamoto. Each uses a different technique, and between them we can see the variety of effects that are possible in the medium, whether it's Krouse's inspired woodblock creatures, Miller's stylized naturalism, Rumford's abstract, multi-textured visions, Specter's slice-of-life realism or Yamamoto's minimalistic, almost pictographic imagery.

MATTHEW DINARO

"Gateless Gate" by Ron Rumford / PROVIDED

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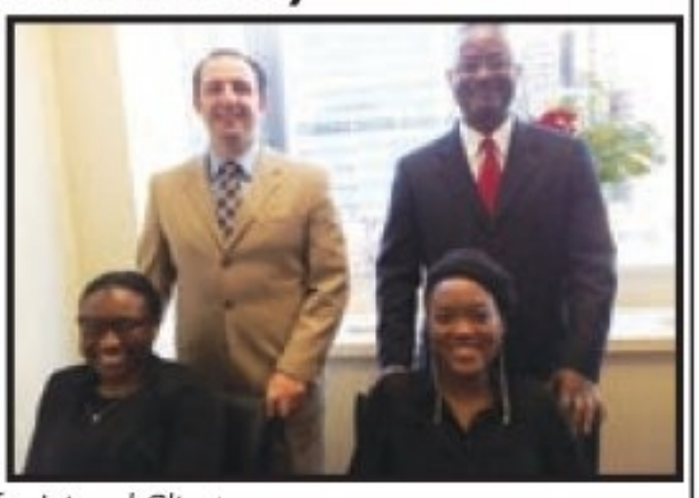

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The best subway-friendly baby gear

Hacks. Stoller in the City blogger Brianne Manz shares her tips.

If there's one thing city moms must quickly master, it's the art of shuffling around with a baby — let alone two! Getting the kiddies around town with ease actually isn't all that hard once you know the insider tricks, mommy blogger Brianne Manz of Stroller in the City tells us. We got her tips on her favorite gear for taking the headache out of commuting with kids.

Consider a scooter or stroller board

As your infant grows into a toddler, using a wearable may literally become a pain in the neck. For Manz, investing in a mini-scooter for her older child was a lifesaver. "The Mini Kick is great for getting your toddler around town because they can scoot along a little faster if you're by yourself with them," she says. "If you have another child in the stroller, they can also ride next to you on the scooter."

It's when you have to move more than one child that commuting in the city gets a little tricky; double strollers aren't the easiest to lug on and off a packed subway train. Instead, try putting the littlest one in a single stroller while the oldest scoots along on an attached stroller board, like the Buggy Board.

The key — for babies as well as toddlers — is choosing products that can fold up easily, so carting them around is hassle-free.

Getting around the city is a whole lot easier when you have the right goods. / ISTOCK

Hands-free

Wear your baby

Wearing your little one on the subway or bus makes it that much easier to get around. For starters, it eliminates the hassle of pushing a stroller (a bit of a game changer during rush hour). Another bonus? If the baby is facing in with a cover, it'll help protect them from yucky subway grime.

"The Ergo 360 is probably the best," Manz says. "It's good for your back, you don't really feel that much weight, and you won't feel crippled after you're running around town."

Urban mom top pick

Get yourself the right stroller

While a large, fancy-pants stroller is amazing for everyday use (especially grocery shopping), it can be a nightmare on the subway as these giant, sturdy contraptions rarely fold up easily. Instead, keep a collapsible stroller on hand.

"My favorite is a lightweight umbrella-type stroller, like the UPPAbaby G-Luxe," says Manz. "It's great because it's light enough that you can actually carry your kid in it up and down the stairs of the subway if it doesn't have an elevator." The Baby Jogger City Mini is also a sturdy choice that folds up in two seconds flat.

MARIANNE HAYES
Ⓐ MetroPhilly
letter@metro.us

The UPPAbaby G-Luxe is one of Stroller in the City blogger Brianne Manz's top picks. / PROVIDED

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Life lessons learned from Dr. Seuss

These bedtime story standbys are full of wise, rhyming words.

MARIANNE HAYES

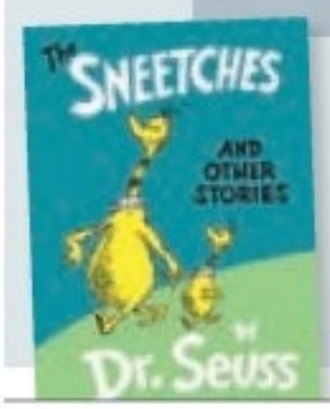
Dr. Seuss lovers are abuzz this week for a number of reasons. Not only did we recently celebrate his 111th birthday, we also learned of a new Seuss story that hits bookstores this summer.

Dr. Seuss was a genius when it came to hiding profound messages just under the surface of rhymes. According to Dr. Seuss himself, nonsense is a necessary ingredient in life that allows you to see "through the wrong end of a telescope."

"I like nonsense, it wakes up the brain cells," he said. "Which is what I do, and that enables you to laugh at life's realities."Here's a list of three valuable life lessons gleaned from our favorite Dr. Seuss books.

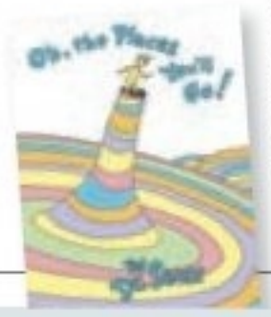
1 'The Sneetches'

Be proud of who you are. If the sneetches taught us one thing, it was the importance of not conforming. The story follows a clan of imaginary creatures all striving to raise their social status. While star-bellied sneetches live the good life filled with frankfurter roasts and marshmallow toasts, those with no stars go without. But the social dynamic is flipped on its head with the invention of a machine that can stamp any old nobody with a star on their belly, thus diminishing its value. At its heart, this story is about celebrating the things that make you unique.



2 'Oh, The Places You'll Go!'

Trust life to take you where you're meant to go. In this book, the narrator warns that while most of us start out optimistic, we soon encounter "bang-ups and hang-ups." The powerful message here is to get back up, and to have faith in where life is taking you.



3 'The Lorax'

Take care of the earth. This story is a cautionary tale of the terrible things that happen when the environment is stripped of its natural resources. In "The Lorax," it's those rare truffula trees that bring out the greedy, money-hungry folks. It doesn't take a genius to see the parallels between today's world and the questionable, destructive lengths the book's antagonist goes to in order to cash in on these trees.

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Horoscope

♓ Pisces | Feb. 19-March 20
Get involved in an outing that will inspire you to incorporate some of your dreams, hopes and wishes into the mix.

♈ Aries | March 21-April 20
Take a look at your assets and consider what you can do to raise your standard of living. Look for a new property or investment that will grow in value.

♉ Taurus | April 21-May 21
Set the record straight. Express your concerns. You'll feel much better once you address issues that have been dragging you down.

♊ Gemini | May 22-June 20
Take a little "me" time to rejuvenate. Once you realize what's most important to you, it will be easy to move forward.

♋ Cancer | June 21-July 22
You can do no wrong if you stick to the things you do best. Plan to take part in an entertaining activity that will boost your awareness.

♌ Leo | July 23-Aug. 22
You will be overwhelmed if you say yes to too many people. Take care of your chores and do something to reward yourself for a change.

♍ Virgo | Aug. 23-Sept. 22
Stop dreaming and start doing. A jaunt to visit a friend or view an exhibit will revive old plans and give you an incentive to enjoy life.

♎ Libra | Sept. 23-Oct. 22
our sophisticated way of doing things will separate you from the crowd. Greater involvement in unusual pastimes will open your mind.

♏ Scorpio | Oct. 23-Nov. 21
You will be touchy if someone tries to push you in a direction that you're uncertain about. Take time to be reclusive and work on projects that you enjoy.

♐ Sagittarius | Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Put your energy, effort and time into making your home suit your needs. Consider moving things around to lift your spirits.

♑ Capricorn | Dec. 22-Jan. 20
Think about what you can contribute. Participation will bring you satisfaction and the chance to make a difference in society.

♒ Aquarius | Jan. 21-Feb. 18
Someone will try to make you look bad. You can outsmart anyone who is a threat to you if you are secretive about your plans and affairs. EUGENIA LAST

Sudoku: Easy and hard

		7				1	8	9
			6	7			3	5
8								6
				5	7			8
1	3						7	2
7			2	6				
5								1
3	2			9	4			
6	4	8				2		

			9			1		5
4		5	8				2	9
					7		6	
		7			5			3
		1	2	3	4	8		
3			6			5		
	1		3					
8	5				6	2		4
2		6			8			

How to play
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Letters to the editor

What graffiti and Trump have in common

I think the posters reminding people to stand clear of the OPENING doors (and other etiquette) actually help. But couldn't they make posters all around town that remind the people who do lame graffiti tagging that only losers with low self-esteem do tagging? If we make that point enough, no one will want to tag their names, because they'll be ashamed, now that everyone sees thru their childish desire to have their name everywhere. They're like a ghetto Donald Trump! I'm so fed up with this crappy tagging and the immature motives of those who do it. Is anyone in charge?
SHAUNA ERLBAUM, VIA EMAIL

Taking women seriously

Re: 'Being for women doesn't mean being against men' (Metro, March 9) No it doesn't. That is a distracting point. The issue is soft sexism in which so-called "feminists," men or women, encourage women to stereotype themselves. Women will always be second-class citizens since being "feminine" (which actually means being trashy or flirty or seductive) is their priority rather than having a more male sense of self-seriousness.
LUCY MARTINEZ, VIA EMAIL

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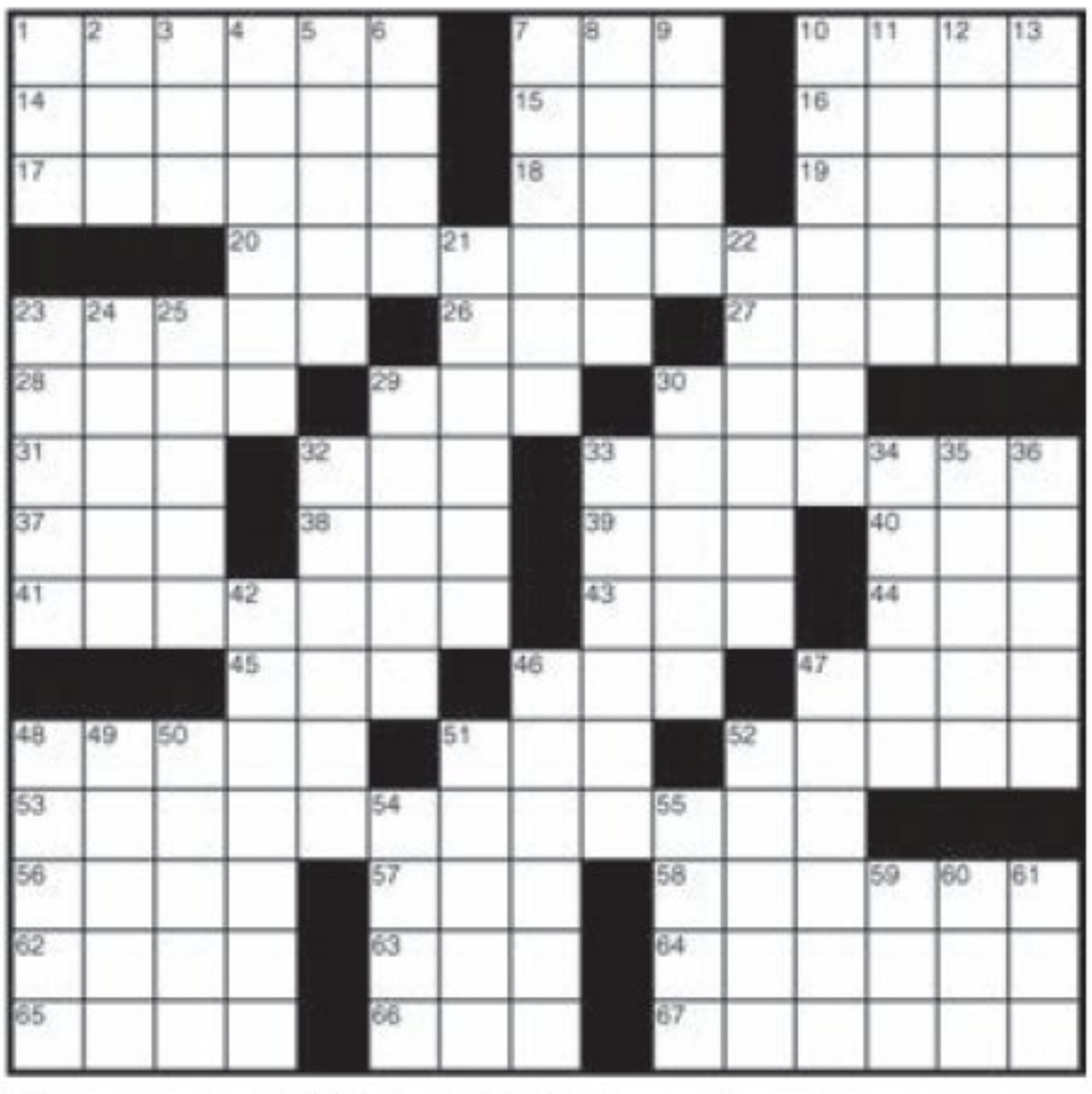
Crossword

Across
1 Champagne and orange juice
7 TV mfr.
10 Part of MIT
14 Ranges of view
15 Joule fraction
16 Make a footnote
17 Stymie
18 — -tzu
19 Fencing weapon
20 Rockies sight (2 wds.)
23 Play banjo
26 Cartoon shriek
27 Bashfully
28 Roller coaster cry
29 Rock's — Leppard
30 Kind of system
31 Previous to
32 Cobbler's tool
33 Stamen sites
37 Aurora, to Plato
38 Bridal notice word
39 Mi. above sea level
40 Livy's dozen
41 Adjusted slightly
43 Matter, in law
44 Hail, to Caesar
45 Diamond org.
46 Geological period
47 Lose energy
48 Yawning
51 Outback bird
52 Count or Duchess
53 Cooperate (2 wds.)
56 Astronaut Sally —
57 Menacing sound
58 Drake's prey
62 "Et tu" time
63 Journey stage
64 Type of union
65 Mardi Gras follower
66 Monsieur's summer
67 Self-defense art

Down
1 Santa Fe hrs.
2 Freud, to himself
3 Do yard work
4 Not see-through
5 Vaccine
6 "The Thin Man" pooch
7 "Whew!" feeling
8 Grouchy one
9 Excited
10 Place to see Capades (2 wds.)
11 A bit cool
12 Girder material
13 Ant-size
21 — over (fainted)
22 Cravat cousins
23 Kind of tooth
24 Afghan
25 Pee Wee of baseball
29 Dork
30 Ms. Barkin of films
32 Harem jewelry
33 "Like, wow, man!" (hyph.)
34 Put on a pedestal
35 Opponent
36 Long bout
42 Least scarce
46 Appear
47 More resolute
48 One of twelve
49 Sherpa, often
50 Colonial suitor
51 Snowy-white bird
52 — incognita
54 Give the eye
55 Swing an ax
59 Oklahoma town
60 Morse click
61 Tucked away

Yesterday's answer



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Eagles: What you need to know

1 Kelly made Maclin, McCoy, Jackson better

All over Twitter this weekend, Eagles and NFL fans pondered, and some mourned the loss of the final dynamic Eagles weapon from the Andy Reid era.

Jeremy Maclin showed it was all about the money, spurning the Eagles and their $9 million offer for $11 million and a reunion with Reid in Kansas City.

So now Maclin, LeSean McCoy and DeSean Jackson (a year ago) have all left after a career year in Philly. This begs the question: how much did the Chip Kelly system inflate the performances of those three superstars?

Maclin was second-fiddle to Jackson from 2009-2012, but his production jumped from career highs of 122 catches and 964 yards to 144 for 1,318 under Kelly in 2013. And it could have been even more if Nick Foles, who cited Maclin as a favorite target, didn't get hurt.

McCoy, similarly, gained a ridiculous 43 percent of career yardage during the last two years, with the other 57 percent coming during the four seasons from 2009-2012.

Jackson also jumped from a high of 1,156 yards pre-Kelly to 1,332 under Kelly, to 1,169 post-Kelly.

While it's certainly arguable, perhaps it's the system that prevails. Kelly might just know what he's doing after all. **EVAN MACY**

JEREMY MACLIN
GETTY IMAGES

2 It's all about the money

Lets take a look at the LeSean McCoy-for-Kiko Alonso trade in a different way. LeSean McCoy will make a bunch of money with the Bills, up to $16 million this upcoming season. The Eagles got salary relief that exceeded the $7.5 million they opened up via the trade, while also acquiring a stud linebacker in Alonso, who will make just over half a million this season, and a similar salary over the next three seasons.

For $7.5 million split over two seasons, the Eagles will sign Frank Gore, who has gained over 1,000 yards in eight of the last nine seasons. They're also left with at least $6 million, if not more, to play with at running back or other positions after McCoy's departure. Not a bad haul. **EVAN MACY**

3 Needs being addressed

The consensus weak spot from the 2014 Eagles was cornerback, and the Birds went out and got the best one available in Byron Maxwell.

Entering his prime at 27-years-old, Maxwell has impressive size and is a playmaker. With the best defense in the NFL in Seattle, Maxwell tallied six interceptions, 24 pass breakups and two forced fumbles in 29 games in 2013 and 2014. At worst, he fills a need and replaces the train wreck that was Bradley Fletcher. At best, he's the shutdown corner of the future. **EVAN MACY**

BYRON MAXWELL
GETTY IMAGES

4 QB controversy starts to brew

As far as quarterbacks go, there appears to be only one certainty for the Eagles moving forward — Mark Sanchez will be on the squad in 2015.

It was announced late Sunday that Sanchez, a 28-year-old veteran who completed a team record 64 percent of his passes for 2,418 yards, 14 touchdowns and 11 interceptions in 2014, signed a two-year deal worth up to $16 million. Just $5.5 million is guaranteed.

So what does this mean? Well, he would be a well-qualified mentor and tutor for Marcus Mariota, should the Eagles move up and draft him. And it also puts Nick Foles on trade watch.

However, Foles could still return to give the Eagles the same depth they had last year. Stay tuned. **EVAN MACY**

3 SPORTS

Spring training news

Lee's career ending?

Cliff Lee's two-inning start Thursday could be his final big league appearance. With discomfort in his elbow a few days after pitching, Lee has been shut down and surgery is being considered. If another elbow surgery is deemed necessary, it will likely spell the end of his career.

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MACNOW: MAKING SENSE OF EAGLES' TRANSFORMATION

Opinion

GLEN MACNOW

REALGLENMACNOW

Glen Macnow has been an outspoken voice in Philly sports for nearly three decades.

Let's be honest: We're just guessing whether Chip Kelly has a clue about personnel. There's evidence, after two seasons, that he's a topflight coach — although I still can't figure why he didn't try to run it in against the Niners. But can Joe College mold a franchise? We've pondered that since Jeff Lurie granted Kelly omnipotence in the New Year's weekend purge.

We're about to find out.

Free agency officially begins tomorrow. Kelly didn't wait for the starting bell to reshape the Eagles quicker than any GM we've seen. This is more dynamic than adding T.O. and Jevon Kearse in 2004 (which worked), more radical than the Dream Team of 2011 (which failed).

The checklist, subject to change by the time you read this is:

Added: CB Byron Maxwell, ILB linebacker Kiko Alonso, RB Frank Gore, QB Mark Sanchez (new contract).

Subtracted: CB Cary Williams, G Todd Herremans, TE James Casey, OLB Trent Cole, RB LeSean McCoy, WR Jeremy Maclin.

Much more will occur over the next week. And, of course, this may all culminate in a Draft Day makeover with QB Marcus Mariota coming in as the presumptive savior. (For the record, I remain a "Stick with Nick" guy).

So as Kelly launches this plane off a cliff, and we all pray that he knows how to aviate, here are some observations:

McCoy and Maclin, both fan favorites, have finished their Eagles' careers. / GETTY IMAGES

1 Clearly, this coach believes he can plug anyone in on offense and still score points. Dropping DeSean Jackson, LeSean McCoy and Jeremy Maclin kissed away 33 touchdowns and 5,576 yards in the past two years. Kelly, it appears, sees no need to spend big money for skill-position players — trusting that his system can beat anyone. And, perhaps "culture beats talent," but there was absolutely nothing wrong with the culture Maclin brought to the team.

2 No way Frank Gore is an upgrade over McCoy, except that he saves money that can be applied elsewhere. Gore is 32, and has never played in an offense with this hyperspeed pace. I'll predict that his 2015 numbers decline the second half of the season as he yearns for rest and oxygen.

3 I'm confident Byron Maxwell isn't Son of Nnamdi, and I believe Kiko Alonso becomes a Pro Bowler. Quoting @joebanner13 on Twitter: "The Eagles are clearly switching assets from offense to defense. Counting more on scheme to score points and talent to stop them." If nothing else, lifelong Eagles fans will treasure the return of a stout defense.

4 Bottom line: I'm skeptical. Like most, I believe Kelly is an innovative football man, but his past reaches for Williams, Riley Cooper and Matt Barkley give me pause. And I'm convinced massive year-to-year turnover doesn't work in the NFL.

But, hell. I don't know. You don't know. Lurie doesn't know. We're just hoping Chip really is the next Belichick and this ends up in a Super Bowl parade.

I just wish I could shed this nagging feeling that two or three years from now Chip is waving goodbye, on his way to Enormous State U. We'll still be here, awaiting the next savior.

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Hextall bright spot as Flyers begin to spiral

NHL. With this season nearly over, the Flyers are in good shape for next season, thanks to their first-year GM.

The Philadelphia Flyers have not exactly had a banner year on the ice, but the front office, most notably general manager Ron Hextall, has had a successful season off of it.

In his first year in the role, Hextall has put the organization in a better position for the present and future — while also getting a head start on fixing some of the problems stemming from the past — with nearly every move he's made in the last 10 months.

He has improved the current roster with shrewd and inexpensive signings of players that may also help down the road, and through a handful of shrewd trades stockpiled a number of high draft picks and took small steps to untangle the awful cap mess the team inherited from former GM Paul Holmgren.

His performance at the trade deadline last week proved his mettle in negotiating and cemented his true potential as a GM.

In two separate trades involving veteran defensemen Kimmo Timonen and Braydon Coburn, Hextall netted a first-, second- and third-round pick, a conditional pick that could turn into another second-rounder, a young inexpensive defenseman and freed up $4.5 million on next year's cap.

Hextall's first major deal — another winner — last summer was shipping Scott Hartnell to Columbus for R.J. Umberger and a fourth-round pick. While it has mostly been a wash on the stat sheet and both players make about $4.6-7 million, Umberger's contract expires two years before Hartnell's.

He has also hit a home run with a trio of under-the-radar signings of journeyman defenseman Nick Schultz, discarded defenseman Michael Del Zotto and international forward Pierre-Edouard Bellemare. Schultz and Bellemare were signed to extensions just before the deadline, and Del Zotto has regained the form that made him one of the top young players in the game and should be a target to re-sign.

In less than a year, Hextall has implemented a long-term plan, strictly adhered to it and given the Flyers a clear roadmap for success.

ERIC GOLDSTEIN
@EricEsponda
sports@metro.us

Flying blind

Flyers weekend will likely cost them playoffs

In what was a make-or-break weekend, the Flyers unfortunately broke. They blew a one-goal lead in the final 14 seconds of regulation before losing in overtime in Boston on Saturday, then falling to the Devils on Sunday.

The Flyers now trail the Bruins by seven points for the final wild-card spot and have just 15 games left in the season. Barring a miraculous finish, it appears the Flyers will miss the postseason for the second time in the last three years. ERIC GOLDSTEIN

Regardless of whether the Flyers make the playoffs this season, Hextall had a successful season as GM. / GETTY IMAGES

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Free agency frenzy underway

Graham slam

Eagles agree to bring back LB Graham

Multiple sources confirmed that linebacker Brandon Graham, fresh off his best season as an Eagle, will return on a four-year, $26 million deal. It's being reported that $14 million of that is guaranteed.

The Inquirer's Jeff McLane says the signing means the Birds are out on Steelers linebacker Jason Worilds, who would probably demand a higher salary.

The Eagles, by saving money on Graham over Worilds or another expensive linebacker, have money to pursue their other needs, which include offensive guard and cornerback.

They also in need of a wide receiver to replace Jeremy Maclin and could look at Andre Johnson, released by the Texans on Monday afternoon.

EVAN MACY

NFL. Big names are finding new landing spots.

Christmas comes early for a number of teams under the increased salary cap of $143 million.

Tuesday begins the NFL's free-agent frenzy, and with as many as six teams (Eagles, Jets, Titans, Browns, Raiders, and Jaguars) enjoying as much as $44 million in cap space, the 4 p.m. commencement should be fun to watch.

The Jags lead the way with a whopping $68.47 million under the raised cap, but that doesn't mean every A-plus star will flock to Florida, as a contender like the Eagles ($44.766 million) will also have the ability to steal away a few big names.

Here's a look at five of the most sought-after targets during the whirlwind:

1 Darrelle Revis, CB

The Patriots declined to pick up Revis' $20 million option Monday, which was expected. But New England must move fast to re-sign the man who changed the face of its championship defense in 2014. Revis is every bit the impact player that's advertised as during his only year in New England, he helped hold opposing quarterbacks to a passer rating of just 74.7 and helped the defense match the excellence of their offensive brethren. Cornerbacks the caliber of Revis rarely hit the open market, so he'll definitely receive his fair share of calls. One of those will undoubtedly be from the New York Jets, who have been hot for Revis for a while now.

Metro's Kristian Dyer reported Monday, however, that the Jets "wouldn't break the piggy bank" to bring Revis back. A high-ranking source did say that the Jets' interest is strong in the All-Pro corner. **Landing spots:** Patriots, Jets

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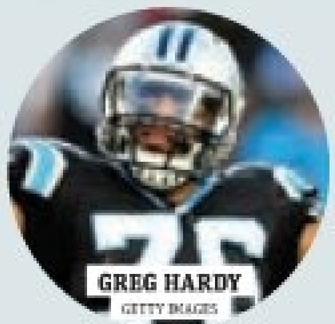
GREG HARDY
GETTY IMAGES

2 Greg Hardy, DE

Hardy is the ultimate gamble, as his legal issues — he missed 15 games in 2014, appealing a ruling that said he assaulted his ex-girlfriend — should force teams to stay away. He racked up 15 sacks in 2013. **Landing spots:** Colts, Bengals

3 Julius Thomas WR

The guy who made the phrase "too easy" famous will not make it easy for the Broncos to re-sign him. Thomas, who grew up in California and was reportedly a "big-time Raiders fan" growing up, will be a highly sought prospect as long as the Jaguars can't close the deal. **Landing spots:** Jaguars, Raiders

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4 DeMarco Murray, RB

The Cowboys chose to place the franchise tag on WR Dez Bryant instead of arguably the league's best running back, but don't cry poverty for Murray, who'll most definitely cash in somewhere — whether it be Dallas or someplace else. Many thought the star back would return to Dallas after it seemed like the running back market would dry up before it started, but then the Bills traded for LeSean McCoy and then reportedly offered a five-year extension that included $26.5 million in guarantees. Murray's agents will likely use McCoy as leverage. **Landing spots:** Cowboys, Jaguars

DeMarco Murray heads the RB market. / GETTY IMAGES

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Mayor's Office of Community Empowerment & Opportunity Oversight Board Meetings 2015

Tuesday, March 10, 2015
Tuesday, June 9, 2015
Tuesday, September 8, 2015
Tuesday, December 8, 2015

Meetings will be held from Noon – 2pm on the dates listed.

The meeting location will be
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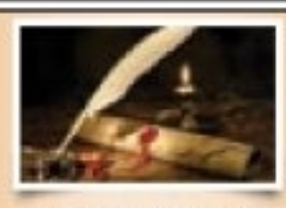

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